

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF AMYTIS
(GRASS-BIRD) FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

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WHILST recently examining two birds in spirits, sent me by Mr. Bernard H. Woodward, F.G.S., the Curator of the Perth Museum, I had need, for the purposes of comparison, of such of the genus *Amytis* and the genera allied thereto as were locally available.

The only skin of the genus referred to, readily procurable, was one thought to be *Amytis macrura*, but a brief examination sufficed to show that it was not that bird, and, further, that it did not answer to any other member of that genus hitherto described.

I have, therefore, to declare it a new species, and I base my declaration on the following external and structural differences, taking *A. macrura* as a type:—

Firstly.—The five rictal bristles characteristic of the genus are not so pronounced as in *A. striata* (a skin of which has since been furnished me), the two bristles nearest the nostrils being only just discernible to the naked eye. Under a powerful lens both *A. striata* and *A. gigantura* show six rictal bristles, the sixth being rudimentary.

Secondly.—The mandibles are less robust than in *A. striata*.

Thirdly.—The total length, as also the length of the wings and tail, exceed in a material degree those of any other member of the genus. A table of measurements is subjoined for comparison.

Fourthly.—Material differences in the colour of and dispositions of colour in its plumage compared with the other members of the genus.

These differences and dispositions may be summarized as follows:—

- Present.*—(a.) Rusty-red shoulder patch of *A. textilis*.
Absent.—(b.) Black cheek stripe of *A. textilis*.
 (c.) Chestnut-red upper surface, dark fore part of crown, bright ferruginous lores, and white fore-neck and breast of *A. striata*.
 (d.) Black cheek stripe, ashy-white lores, brick-red streak at forehead base, and dark brown ear coverts of *A. macrura*; and
 (e.) White lores, white cheeks streaked black, white under surface of body, and bright rufous sides of *A. goyderi*.

The feather striations are very distinctly and regularly marked.

The following is a specific description of the new species:—

AMYTIS GIGANTURA, sp. nov.

The whole of the upper surface extending from the forehead to and including the wings and tail a uniform dull brown, with the feathers of the head, neck, cheeks, mantle, tail, and wing coverts striated with white, the striations more numerous and emphatic on the head and nape; tail feathers (10) not striated, but shafts brighter brown than the web; chin, throat, and breast with lighter wash of brown tending towards fawn; feathers distinctly striated with white; abdomen still lighter, with striations fainter; a bright chestnut patch on each side of spring, but in front of thigh; under wing coverts light chestnut; under surface of tail feathers brown; shafts white at base, but becoming brownish towards extremities; web of tail feathers open, and shafts robust and distinct; primaries brown with bright brown shafts; first primary diminutive, second longer but much shorter than third, third distinctly shorter than fourth, the fourth and remaining ones almost of even length; mandibles bright brown; legs dark brown; total length culmen, wing, tail, and tarsus as per table.

Locality, Mt. Magnet, Western Australia.

The specific name of *macrura*, which would have been specially appropriate, having already been allotted, I propose that it receive the scientific name of *Amytis gigantura* (Gr. *gigas* + *oura*), and the vernacular name of the "Western Grass-bird."

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE GENUS AMYTIS ABOVE REFERRED TO.

Member of Genus.	Total Length.	Culmen.	Wing.	Tail.	Tarsus.
A. textilis ...	6.3	0.45	2.45	3.25	0.95
A. striata ...	6.8	0.55	2.45	3.4	1.05
A. macrura ...	6.5	0.55	2.55	3.1	1
A. goyderi ...	5.5	0.45	2.05	2.8	0.85
A. gigantura ...	7.25	0.5	2.75	3.75	0.95

It may be of some interest to know that the birds in spirits mentioned in the first paragraph were specimens of Carter's Desert-bird, and to which I had assigned a new genus. Subsequently the description of that bird in the *Victorian Naturalist* was brought under my notice, and which proved their identity.

THE LITTLE KINGFISHER.—Up to the date of the publication of Mr. A. J. Campbell's work on "Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds" the eggs of the rare Little Kingfisher, *Alcyone pusilla*, Temm., had not been discovered. However, on the 14th February, 1901, in the Cape York district, Queensland, a nest was found in a bank of a creek, containing five eggs, probably the full clutch. The eggs are nearly round in shape, texture of shell fine and glossy, and colour pearly white. Measurements.—(1) .82 x .72, (2) .79 x .71 inch.—T. A. BRITTLEBANK, Myrning. 27/5/01.